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ABSTRACT

A Multiphase Rolling Plan (MRP) implemented by the State University of New York to deal with declining percentages of state tax resources and projections for stabilized enrollments is described. For the preliminary budget cycle for fiscal year 1982-1983, academic and mission plans were linked to the annual budgeting process. Developed to ensure the consideration of academic, fiscal, and political criteria in institutional plans and budgets, MRP was organized along three major dimensions: intercampus program changes, intercampus affiliations and trades, and campus mission changes and system reconfiguration. Among the critical concepts of the plan are the following: meshing planning and budgeting; 5-year rolling horizon; systemwide configuration and options; strengthening the quality of the system; and campus planning essential to system planning. At the present time, 34 state-operated/funded campuses are included in every aspect of MRP's detailed processes. These campuses were provided a comprehensive preliminary budget package that contained historical 1975 and 1980 data, and that required from the campuses 1982 budget request information along with projections for 1985. Linking planning to the actual budget in the system and the campuses was based on strong executive leadership and a committee network and informal supporting subcommittees. The official budget and planning document forwarded to the campuses contained 15 schedules, 8 of which are listed. Three major systems that were used in supporting the preliminary budget process were the Course and Section Analysis System, the Student Data File, and the Academic Program Information System. Eight conditions and fluid relationships that characterize institutional research are also outlined. (SW)

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THE ROLE AND SCOPE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN STATE UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND BUDGETING

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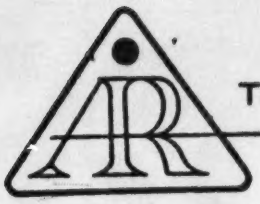

THE ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

This paper was presented at the Twenty-Second Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Denver Hilton Hotel in Denver, Colorado, May 16-19, 1982. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum papers.

D. R. Coleman, Chairman
Forum Publication
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Faced with declining percentages of State tax resources and projections for stabilized enrollments, the State University of New York developed and implemented a "Multiphase Rolling Plan" for the 380,000 student, 64-campus system. A comprehensive and detailed linkage of academic and mission plans to the annual budgeting process was initiated with the preliminary budget cycle for fiscal 1982-83. A description of the environment, concepts, organization, and implications for the future are provided. The paper concludes with an outline of eight conditions and fluid relationships particular to Institutional Research.

THE ROLE AND SCOPE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN STATE UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Background

During the days of growth and comparative affluence under the Rockefeller administration in the 1950's and 60's, planning by the State University of New York (SUNY) was geared toward developing and implementing a comprehensive system of public higher education for the residents of New York State. Funding was primarily enrollment driven and, with enrollments growing, there was little worry about routinely and systematically linking academic and mission plans to the annual budgeting process in a comprehensive, detailed fashion. Times have changed, however, and so must planning and budgeting. What was responsive and appropriate a decade ago is no longer adequate.

Today, like other components of higher education, SUNY is faced with declining percentages of State tax resources and projections for stabilized enrollments. This can be no more dramatically evident than in the State of New York Executive Budget, one of the most important references to the proposed financing for New York State agencies. Submitted by Governor Carey to the New York Legislature on January 19, 1981, this document was said to have been constructed so as to reinforce the Governor's commitment to the discipline of financial austerity. It recommended that less be spent on general government and more on direct human services, including eventual full State takeover of Medicaid costs. Disagreement over the proposed budget was so severe that no budget for New York State for the period April 1, 1981 through March 31, 1982 was passed into law until early May 1981.

The intent of the Executive Office for higher education was clear as can be seen by the "Message of the Governor" section of the budget:

> My recommendations for the State University . . . reflect both the need for budgetary restraint and the fact that the University has by now stabilized most of its operations . . we cannot ignore a projected decline in the State's college-bound population that dictates consolidation rather than expansion...(1)

The environment of the University and the climate in which it operates thus demands strong, creative, and flexible management.

The Multiphase Rolling Plan (MRP)

The essential concepts of State University's Multiphase Rolling Plan (MRP) were formed, developed and officially presented to Executive Staff, the Board of Trustees, and the University Community during the period August - December 1980. A special presentation was made to the Board of Trustees during their monthly meeting in December on the document, "A Multiphase 'Rolling Plan' for the State University of New York, November 1, 1980." A resolution endorsing the plan was passed by the Trustees and the Chancellor was given authorization to start implementing it.

The "Multiphase Rolling Plan" for the system is a dynamic process made up of several levels of change with different timetables, all of which result in a meshing of planning and budgeting. Not content to merely develop a traditional "Five-year Plan" in response to the call for planning by the Executive Office and the Legislature, SUNY strove to develop a creative, flexible process which would combine overall

system and institutional priorities with as much campus flexibility as possible in the policy, managerial, financial, and programmatic areas.

The role and scope of our office went beyond the implementation of the new process. Policy and Analysis-Institutional Research played a key role throughout the various creation, development, and refinement stages of MRP. Developed to ensure the address of academic, fiscal, and political criteria in institutional plans and budgets, MRP is organized along three major dimensions:

1. Intercampus Program Changes - New or existing programs will be strengthened by eliminating or reducing programs with declining enrollments and/or of lesser priority.
2. Intercampus Affiliations and Trades - As a system of public higher education, State University has unique and multiple opportunities for program affiliations and trades. Sharing of resources between or among campuses with the same or complementary programs adds strength and promotes excellence.
3. Campus Mission Changes and System Reconfiguration - The involvement of all constituents is necessary for this complex, difficult, and politically sensitive phase. The goals of SUNY, both as a system and as 64 individual institutions, must be developed and pursued within the fiscal, demographic, and political context of New York State.

The complexity, diversity, and just sheer magnitude of SUNY underscore in an acute fashion the need for a responsive policy, procedural, and evaluative management instrument. We have over 3,700 degree programs and in Fall 1981 enrolled 379,741 students. The University's planning/budgeting process had to be constructed to

effectively deal with and utilize these demographics and their accompanying complexities, challenges and opportunities. Among the critical concepts of the Multiphase Rolling Plan designed to accomplish this are the following:

a. Meshing planning and budgeting: The Plan = The Budget

b. Five-year rolling horizon, a dynamic process

c. System-wide configuration and options

d. Strengthening the quality of the system

e. Campus planning essential to system planning.

Many policy issues were raised through MRP. These may be grouped into three categories and may take the form of questions as outlined below:

State Policy Issues

If SUNY's enrollment projections are correct, will access to public higher education be maintained? If SUNY's fiscal projections are correct, can "share of State funds to higher education and/or SUNY be increased?" If State funding is insufficient for higher education and/or SUNY, what funding level can be expected and how does the State propose to deal with corresponding enrollment reduction?

SUNY Policy Issues

If underfunding continues, should there be selective vs. across-the-board cuts? Quality vs. diversity and scope? Should SUNY's primary planning goal be to meet funding shortfalls? To increase fiscal and program efficiencies? To strengthen the quality of the System? How should planning priorities be determined: at campuses? system-wide?

SUNY and State Policy Issues

How great a State University system does the State of New York want? How great a State University system is the State willing to have?

While all 64 institutions already fall under the purviews of the policy and intent of MRP, at the present time just the 34 State-operated/funded campuses are included in every aspect of MRP's detailed processes. These campuses were given a detailed, comprehensive preliminary budget package which contained historical 1975 and 1980 data and which required from the campuses 1982 budget request information along with projections for 1985. In coupling planning and budgeting, every campus was to include each of the foregoing major dimensions of MRP in its request.

Getting the system and the campuses to the point where planning is comprehensively linked to the actual budget was accomplished through strong executive leadership coupled with a committee network and informal supporting subcommittees. Following are three major committees whose work resulted in revamping the preliminary budget process:

1. Committee on Planning and Budgeting ("Meshing" Committee) - This committee bore major responsibility for developing the processes and procedures necessary to mesh planning with budgeting. The ten members consisted of five presidents, one dean, two vice presidents, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Policy and Analysis, and a faculty member.
2. Committee on System Priorities - This committee evolved from the SUNY Council of Presidents and was responsible for developing

system-wide policies to resolve conflicting priorities and to ensure a consolidated, comprehensive set of priorities for the University.

3. Central Administration Planning and Budgeting Task Force - This group was comprised of broad representation from Central Staff with major thrust and direction being established by the Offices of Policy and Analysis, Finance and Business, Capital Facilities, and the Executive Assistant to the Chancellor. Other departments that were heavily involved in various elements of the process included the Office of Academic Programs, Policy and Planning and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. In integrating and interpreting the findings and recommendations of the first two committees, this working group designed the actual budget schedules and guidelines distributed to the campuses.

In addition to these three committees, a fourth was established to address issues particular to community colleges with an eye towards eventually developing a process similar to that of the State-operated institutions.

MRP and the 1982-83 Preliminary Budget

In charting the future of the University, Central Administration follows an agenda with the New York State Division of the Budget (DOB) similar in format but not in content to that employed for the past several years. The content of this year's official budget request represents the results and decisions reached through the Multiphase Rolling Plan as applied to the preliminary budget process.

During the period April through May 1981, the Planning and Budgeting Task Force consolidated, integrated, interpreted, and

applied the recommendations of the other major committees and developed budget schedules, directions, guidelines, and procedures to forward to the campuses to follow in developing their preliminary budget request for fiscal 1982-83. This new Budget and Planning Document is the embodiment of the MRP process. Policy and Analysis-Institutional Research played a constant and key role not only in the development of MRP but in the specific application of its concepts to the current budget process.

General Guidelines

Copies of the completed Budget and Planning Document were to be submitted to the Office of Finance and Business by the campuses at least five days prior to their scheduled meeting date but in no case later than July 6. Lengthy narrative, supplemental information, etc. submitted by some campuses was contained in separate sections and cross-referenced to relevant schedules. Presidents were asked to prepare and submit an agenda at least ten days in advance of their campus hearing which outlined specific topics and program proposals.

The agendum were reviewed by selected senior officers of Central Staff whose knowledge about the campuses or the process would highlight items that should be added to or deleted from the agenda. One key check was to ensure that the agenda listed what appeared to be critical elements as reflected through the President's statement and the other schedules. Also considered was the extent to which the Chancellor's following four objectives for the budget process were addressed:

1. Development of a planning process that includes resource parameters.

2. Campus goals which can be achieved with projected staff, funds, and facilities.
3. Consistency in major program objectives as compared to demands and resources.
4. Campus objectives and priorities as part of system directions, objectives, and priorities.

All agendum were reviewed and finalized by the Vice Chancellors and campuses were notified of any changes at least five days prior to their hearing date.

Unlike past years, most budget discussion sessions with the campus were just a couple of hours long. This was done in an effort to promote the address of only key items and to avoid unnecessary detail. To underscore the importance of these sessions, every hearing was chaired by either the Chancellor or the Executive Vice Chancellor.

Historical Data for Budget and Planning Documents

The official Budget and Planning Document forwarded to the campuses contained fifteen schedules. While all were important to the process, Policy and Analysis-Institutional Research was charged with primary or co-primary analysis for eight schedules:

Schedule I - Agenda.

Schedule III - Campus Planning, Evaluation and Review Processes.

Schedule VI (items 3 & 4) - Summary Information: Enrollment Data and Approved Instructional Programs.

Schedule VII(b) - 1982-83 Enrollment Plan.

Schedule IX (b,c) - Summary of Academic Administrative Units.
-FTE Workload and FTE Faculty by Major Academic Administrative Unit.

Schedule X (a,b) - Historical and Projected Trends in Headcount Enrollment and Degrees Granted by Broad Discipline Categories, Fall 1975 through Fall 1985.

Schedule XI - Faculty and Staff Planning (Full-time Faculty).

Schedule XV - Program Plans (Affiliations, Trades, Additions, Deletions).

All institutions' research staff became heavily involved in the 1982-83 budget process commencing in May. During that time, our primary tasks fell into the following five categories:

1. Getting major information systems in order for producing individual campus and system-wide reports.
2. Generating reports and listings from major files using SPSS and APL.
3. Establishing processes, procedures, and controls for processing and analyzing completed campus schedules.
4. Preposting historical 1975 and 1980 data.
5. Developing APL programs for processing 1982 and 1985 data.

Commencing with the preliminary budget cycle for fiscal 1982-83, less financial data were required. This was the first time in many years that academic information was included as part of the system-wide budget process insofar as specifying FTE faculty instructional workload, headcount enrollment by major program, etc.

Over the course of the past five years, the management information systems capability of Central Staff has expanded. This expansion has been coupled with an increase in the accuracy and understanding of the systems and a realization of the need to actively utilize these

systems in planning and budgeting as well as in simulations, modeling, and projections for University-wide purposes. The application of MRP to the present budget cycle and the utilization of University systems and data helped ensure that there was consistent, across-campus consideration by top managers of those items and variables necessary for the system as a whole to go forward. We live in an age where University-wide planning requires University-wide systems.

Three major systems were utilized by our office in supporting the preliminary budget process:

1. The Course and Section Analysis (CASA) system contains information on faculty instructional workload.
2. The Student Data File (SDF) is an automated student information file.
3. The Academic Program Information System (APIS) is comprised of four related files. The APIS Enrollment File consists of semester enrollment information and is derived from the Student Data File. The Degree File contains the number and type of degrees awarded plus the sex and ethnicity of the recipients. The APIS Master File contains data concerning the characteristics of each academic program. The fourth component is a twenty-year trend file on enrollments and degrees granted.

In posting the historical 1975 and 1980 data, Institutional Research produced standard reports for completing the schedules. There was a direct relationship between the cells in the schedules and the cells in the reports. Our participation in key management

committees resulted in budget information being solicited in a format permitting direct use of information system reports.

Drawing upon user-oriented computer languages, we aggregated enrollment and degrees granted data into broad discipline categories for ease of consideration during the budget process. Reporting the data by discrete academic program categories would have resulted in an overwhelming amount of detail and would have inhibited the process.

Analysis of Budget and Planning Documents

Intensive brainstorming and analysis sessions were held among key satellite groups within Central Administration. Three areas in Central Staff had primary responsibility for the development, distribution, and analysis of the budget and planning schedules. Policy and Analysis-Institutional Research was one of these. Key managers from each group met regularly to keep one another informed of the results of their analysis efforts, to coordinate the overall review, and to develop questions and issues that Central Staff would pursue in more detail with the affected campus at the individual budget discussions.

In reviewing the eight schedules for which we had primary responsibility, we looked for internal and external consistency among these forms and between these forms and the other schedules and processes of SUNY. We relied upon support systems and staff to check the accuracy and consistency of the figures supplied in the schedules. Professional staff were charged with identifying major issues, concerns, opportunities, and problems.

The statement of the President was a crucial element in the planning and budgeting document. It enunciated future goals, plans and activities of the campus as they were to be achieved within the resources requested and planned. The extent to which the other schedules supported or possibly deviated from the President's statement was one of the key items reviewed. Throughout all of this, we constantly reminded ourselves of the dynamics of the process and the needs of the system. We asked whether the proposals contained within the individual budget schedules were within the campus mission or whether they will require Master Plan amendment. We needed to estimate whether any of the programs and resources requests were duplicative of and/or in competition with other State University programs (existing or proposed), with the City University and/or with private institutions in New York State. We were constantly on the outlook for references to or possibilities for affiliation or trade. The results of these sessions were summarized in the form of memoranda, schedules and outlines. Consolidated, detailed questions and issues were then developed for presentation to the Vice Chancellors and Chancellor for possible use during campus hearings.

After the last campus budget discussion was held, the coordinating groups met and prepared a consolidated budget request on behalf of the entire University. These materials were then submitted to a University-wide Presidential Budget Review Committee for their review and recommendations. This was further reviewed by the Vice Chancellors and by the Chancellor. The planning/budgeting process as well as the major elements of the proposed budget request were presented to the University Board of Trustees in September 1981.

Based upon their guidance, the 1982-83 request was developed and then approved at the October Board meeting. Their approved request was then submitted to the Division of the Budget and reflected, with slight modification, the material briefed to the Division of the Budget on October 9, 1981.

Our focus has been on major issues required by the system to maintain its vitality and to go forward in strengthening the quality of academic programs, maintain access, and effect cost and program efficiencies. A good start has been made on implementing a responsive, consolidated planning process. Among the next steps that are being pursued are the following:

1. An evaluation of the Multiphase Rolling Plan process.
2. Follow-up actions on planning and budgeting items.
3. Review of campus planning procedures.
4. A prioritization process for policy and budget reconciliation and for costs and benefits of competing resource needs.
5. Full implementation of recommendations by the Presidential Meshing Committee.

The Role and Scope of Institutional Research

We have been in the mainstream of the current major development and budgeting efforts and feel as though we have been engaged in processes that really represent what Institutional Research is all about. As illustrated in Figure 1, we must be a participator and/or initiator in processes and events that use our data. Simply responding to requests diminishes our effectiveness. A review of the

literature points to the following eight conditions and fluid relationships:

1. Institutional Researchers must be a party to the conceptualization and design of studies and processes that utilize data in order to be effective.
2. Institutional Researchers should constantly influence and should be influenced by the environment.
3. Environment propels Institutional Researchers upward in pyramidic fashion from conceptualization and design to development of data bases to analysis and generation of information in support of management.
4. In supporting the management function, the Institutional Researcher is satisfying an important internal agency need.
5. Acquisition and application of new analytic techniques, plus the 'rewards' of a job completed and well-done, serve to enhance self-esteem and fulfill the drives of personal and personnel development.
6. Demands of external agencies may serve to promote the development of local information systems, may demand new types of data and analyses, or may raise issues that could alter local-regional operations, the state of the art, and goals for personal and personnel development.
7. The foregoing relationships are interdependent and complimentary.
8. Feedback and adaptation are constant.

The Central Administration of the State University of New York is an exciting environment for Institutional Research. We are glad to be part of that environment.

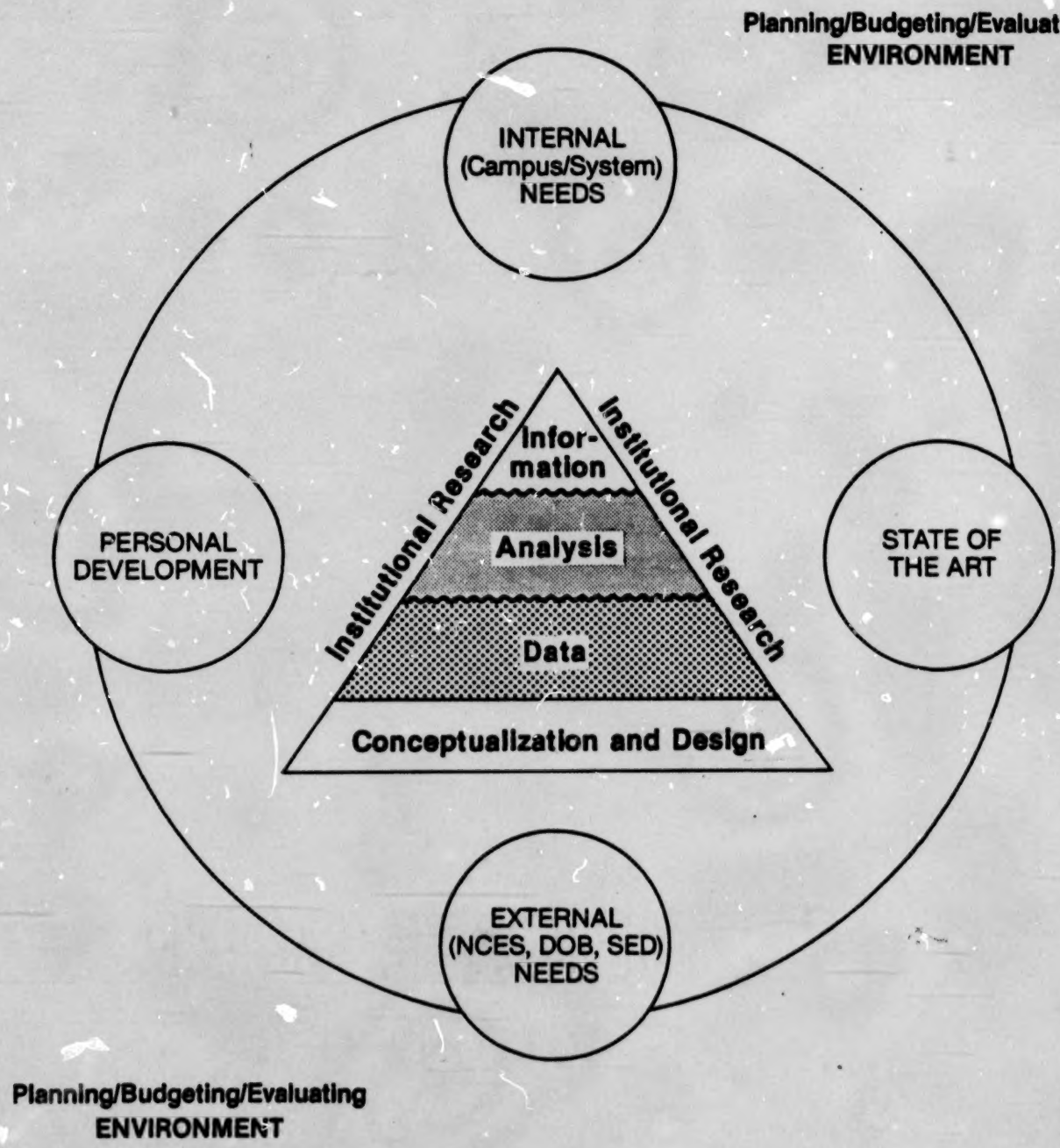

FIGURE 1. The Role and Scope of Institutional Research in State University Planning and Budgeting.

FOOTNOTES:

(1) State of New York Executive Budget for the Fiscal Year April 1, 1982 to March 31, 1982, submitted by Hugh L. Carey, Governor, to the New York State Legislature on January 19, 1982, p. M30.

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Table 80/820 Employees of Institutions Under the Program of the State University of New York, Fall 1979.

Table 81/1021 Comparison of Preliminary (Sept. 28) Fall 1981 Headcount Enrollment with Budget Goals and Previous Year: Comparison by Level of Student and Full-time Undergraduates by Higher Education History, by Type of Institution, State-operated/ funded Institutions of the State University of New York .

Table 81/1024 Comparison of Preliminary (Sept. 28) Fall 1981 Headcount Enrollment with the Previous Year: Comparison of Headcount Enrollment and Full-time Undergraduates by Higher Education History, Community Colleges Under the Program of the State University of New York.

Table 81/994 Official 1980-81 Annual Average F.T.E. Workload and Constituent Credit Hours Produced by Academic Term, Community Colleges Under the Program of the State University of New York.

Table 81/275 Official Credit Course Enrollment, Undergraduate, First Professional and Other Graduates, State University of New York, Fall 1980.

Table 81/316 Student Credit Hours and Full-time Equivalent Workload by Level of Instruction, State-operated/funded Institutions of the State University of New York, Fall 1980.

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